

- House Passes the Homeland Security Appropriations Act -

Washington, DC – Today, U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-Dover) helped the House pass crucial investments in priority homeland security programs. The Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 2892), which passed the House of Representatives today with broad bipartisan support, increases federal funding for securing America's borders, ports and airports. The bill provides for increased border security, especially along the U.S.-Mexico border, including investments to combat the violence, drug smuggling and weapons smuggling currently occurring on the southwest border. The bill funds the full costs of 20,163 Border Patrol Agents, an increase of 7,814 agents since 2006. More than 17,000 of these agents will be based on the U.S.-Mexico border.

The legislation also makes investments in improving aviation security, port security and transit security, including funding to purchase and install the latest explosive detection systems at airports nationwide and develop and deploy systems to screen cargo containers for weapons and nuclear materials.

The bill includes a three-year extension of the E-Verify program, a provision Congressman Hall has been fighting for. The E-verify program allows employers to verify the legal status of workers. Today's action provides \$137 million to operate the system and improve its accuracy and compliance rates.

"This legislation provides critical funding to secure our borders, train our local first responders and safeguard the American people," said Congressman Hall. "It allows us to better prevent threats and attacks, prepare and plan for emergencies and invest in our response capabilities to safeguard our citizens."

The bill was originally passed by the House in June and returned to the House today for final passage in the House-Senate conference report on Homeland Security. The House-Senate conference report passed the House today by a vote of 307 to 114. The Senate is expected to pass the bill next week and then send it to the President's desk to be signed into law.

Funding for security measures includes:

- \$10.1 billion for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) including:
 - \$800 million for Southwest Border investments for Border Security Fencing, Infrastructure, and Technology (BSFIT).
 - \$72.6 million for CBP Southwest Border Anti-Drug Initiatives.
 - Full funding for 20,163 Border Patrol Agents, over 17,000 of which will be based on the Southwest Border. This is a 63% increase over 2006 levels.

- \$1.5 billion for identifying and removing from the United States dangerous criminal undocumented individuals.
- \$137 million to support and improve E-verify.

- \$100 million to combat international trade in illicit drugs, weapons smuggling and crimes associated with violence along the Southwest Border.
- \$1 billion for explosive detection systems at airports.
- \$300 million for grants to improve port security, on top of \$150 million included in Recovery Act funding.
- \$397 million to protect against growing threats to the nation's cyber assets.
- \$903 million for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- \$1 billion for research on homeland security priorities, such as counter-improvised explosives devices, cyber security, air cargo security, and first responder technologies.

"This legislation protects Americans and prepares our nation for 21st century security challenges," Hall added. "As America's security threats evolve, we must evolve with them."

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